

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

MICHAEL JOSEPH,
Plaintiff,
vs.

BEVERLY HILLS CAFE VIII, INC.
and CORAL GABLES OYSTER COMPANY, LLC.
d/b/a GRINGOS SEAFOOD & GRILL,
Defendants.

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, MICHAEL JOSEPH (hereinafter “Plaintiff”), by his undersigned counsel, hereby files this Complaint and sues Defendants BEVERLY HILLS CAFE VIII, INC. and CORAL GABLES OYSTER COMPANY, LLC. d/b/a GRINGOS SEAFOOD & GRILL (hereinafter “Defendants”), for injunctive relief pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181, et seq., (hereinafter the “A.D.A”), the ADA’s Accessibility Guidelines, 28 C.F.R. Part 36 (hereinafter the “ADAAG”), and the Florida Building Code.

JURISDICTION

1. This Court has original jurisdiction over the action pursuant to 28 U.S.C., §§1331 and 1343 for Plaintiff’s claims arising under 42 U.S.C. § 12181. *et seq.*, based upon Defendants’ violations of Title III of the ADA (see also, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202).

2. Defendants’ violations of Title III of the ADA exist at a place of public accommodation and at the property and business subject to this action which is located at 1549 Sunset Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33143 (“Subject Property”).

PARTIES

3. Plaintiff, MICHAEL JOSEPH, is a resident of Broward County, Florida and is *sui juris*. He is a qualified individual with disabilities under the ADA law. Due to an injury in 2003,

Plaintiff has been bound to ambulate in a wheelchair. Plaintiff has visited the Subject Property, which forms the basis of this lawsuit and plan to return to the property to avail himself of the goods and services offered to the public at the property, and to determine whether the property has been made ADA compliant. His access to the Subject Property and/or full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and/or accommodations offered therein was denied and/or limited because of these disabilities and will be denied and/or barriers to access and ADA violations which exist at the Subject Property, including but not limited, to those set forth in the Complaint.

4. Independent of his personal desire to have access to this place of public accommodation free of illegal barriers to access Plaintiff is an advocate of the rights of similarly situated disabled persons and is a "tester" for the purpose of asserting his civil rights and monitoring, ensuring, and determining whether places of public accommodation are in compliance with the ADA. Independent of other subsequent visits, Plaintiff also intends to visit the Subject Property regularly to verify its compliance or non-compliance with the ADA, and its maintenance of the accessible features of the Subject Property. In this instance, Plaintiff, in Plaintiff's individual capacity and as a "tester", visited the Subject Property, encountered barriers to access at the Subject Property, engaged and tested those barriers, suffered legal harm and legal injury and will continue to suffer such harm and injury as a result of the illegal barriers to access and the violations of the ADA set forth herein. It is Plaintiff's belief that said violations will not be corrected without Court intervention, and thus Plaintiff will suffer legal harm and injury in the near future.

5. Defendant, BEVERLY HILLS CAFE VIII, INC. transacts business in the State of Florida and within this judicial district. Defendant is the owner and/or representative of the

owner and/or operator of the property, which is the subject of this action, located on or about 1549 Sunset Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33143 (“Subject Property”).

6. Defendant, CORAL GABLES OYSTER COMPANY, LLC. transacts business in the State of Florida and within this judicial district. Defendant is the owner and/or operator of the restaurant known as GRINGOS SEAFOOD & GRILL, which is the subject of this action, located on or about 1549 Sunset Drive, Coral Gables, FL 33143 (“Subject Property”).

7. The Subject Property is in an area frequently traveled by Plaintiff.

8. The Defendants’ Subject Property is a public accommodation and service establishment, and although required by law to do so, it is not in compliance with the ADA and ADAAG.

9. In this instance, Plaintiff visited the Subject Property and encountered barriers to access at the Subject Property, and engaged barriers, suffered legal harm and injury, and will continue to suffer legal harm and injury as a result of the illegal barriers to access, and Defendants’ ADA violations set forth herein.

10. Plaintiff has suffered and continues to suffer direct and indirect injury as a result of the ADA violations that exist at the Subject Property and the actions or inactions described herein.

11. All events giving rise to this lawsuit occurred in the State of Florida. Venue is proper in this Court as the Subject Property are located in the Southern District.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS AND CLAIM

12. Plaintiff has attempted to and has, to the extent possible, accessed the Subject Property, but could not do so because of his disabilities due to the physical barriers to access, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Subject Property that restrict and/or

limit his access to the Subject Property and/or the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations offered therein, including those barriers, conditions and ADA violations more specifically set forth in this Complaint.

13. Plaintiff intends to visit the Subject Property again in the near future in order to utilize all of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and/or accommodations commonly offered at the Subject Property, but will be unable to do so because of his disability due to the physical barriers to access, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Subject Property that restrict and/or limit his access to the Subject Property and/or accommodations offered therein, including those barriers conditions and ADA violations more specifically set forth in this Complaint.

14. Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff and others with disabilities by denying access to, and full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the Subject Property, as prohibited by 42 U.S.C., § 12182, *et. seq.*, and by failing to remove architectural barriers as required by 42 U.S.C., § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv), and will continue to discriminate against Plaintiff and others with disabilities unless and until Defendants are compelled to remove all physical barriers that exist at the Subject Property, including those specifically set forth herein, and make the Subject Property accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities, including Plaintiff.

15. Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff by failing to comply with the above requirements. A specific, although not exclusive, list of unlawful physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations which preclude and/or limit Plaintiff's ability (because of his disability) to access the Subject Property and/or full and equal enjoyment of the goods,

services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the Subject Property include:

Exterior Dining Area:

1. Inaccessible dining tables located at the first of two exterior dining areas
2. Non-compliant height of dining tables located at the first of two exterior dining areas exceeds maximum height allowance.
3. Required minimum knee and toe clearance not provided at dining tables located at the first of two exterior dining areas.
4. Minimum percentage of existing dining tables required to be accessible not provided at the first of two exterior dining areas.

ADAAG 226 Dining Surfaces and Work Surfaces ADAAG 226.1 General.

Where dining surfaces are provided for the consumption of food or drink, at least 5 percent of the seating spaces and standing spaces at the dining surfaces shall comply with 902.

ADAAG 902.2 Clear Floor or Ground Space.

A clear floor space complying with 305 positioned for a forward approach shall be provided. Knee and toe clearance complying with 306 shall be provided.

ADAAG 902.3 Height.

The tops of dining surfaces and work surfaces shall be 28 inches (710 mm) minimum and 34 inches (865 mm) maximum above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 306.2 Toe Clearance.

ADAAG 306.2.3 Minimum Required Depth.

Where toe clearance is required at an element as part of a clear floor space, the toe clearance shall extend 17 inches (430 mm) minimum under the element.

ADAAG 306.2.5 Width.

Toe clearance shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum.

ADAAG 306.3 Knee Clearance.

ADAAG 306.3.3 Minimum Required Depth.

Where knee clearance is required under an element as part of a clear floor space, the knee clearance shall be 11 inches deep minimum at 9 inches above the ground, and 8 inches deep minimum at 27 inches (685 mm) above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 306.3.5 Width.

Knee clearance shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum.

5. Inaccessible dining tables located at the second of two exterior dining areas
6. Non-compliant height of dining tables located at the second of two exterior dining areas exceeds maximum height allowance.
7. Minimum percentage of existing dining tables required to be accessible not provided at the second of two exterior dining areas.

ADAAG 226 Dining Surfaces and Work Surfaces ADAAG 226.1 General.

Where dining surfaces are provided for the consumption of food or drink, at least 5 percent of the seating spaces and standing spaces at the dining surfaces shall comply with 902.

ADAAG 902.2 Clear Floor or Ground Space.

A clear floor space complying with 305 positioned for a forward approach shall be

provided. Knee and toe clearance complying with 306 shall be provided.

ADAAG 902.3 Height.

The tops of dining surfaces and work surfaces shall be 28 inches (710 mm) minimum and 34 inches (865 mm) maximum above the finish floor or ground.

Bar Area:

8. Inaccessible bar.

9. Non-compliant height of bar exceeds maximum height allowance.

10. Required minimum knee and toe clearance not provided at bar.

11. Portion of bar required to be accessible not provided.

ADAAG 226 Dining Surfaces and Work Surfaces ADAAG 226.1 General.

Where dining surfaces are provided for the consumption of food or drink, at least 5 percent of the seating spaces and standing spaces at the dining surfaces shall comply with 902.

ADAAG 902 Dining Surfaces and Work Surfaces ADAAG 902.1 General.

Dining surfaces and work surfaces shall comply with 902.2 and 902.3.

Advisory 902.1 General.

Dining surfaces include, but are not limited to, bars, tables, lunch counters, and booths.

ADAAG 902.2 Clear Floor or Ground Space.

A clear floor space complying with 305 positioned for a forward approach shall be provided. Knee and toe clearance complying with 306 shall be provided.

ADAAG 902.3 Height.

The tops of dining surfaces and work surfaces shall be 28 inches (710 mm) minimum and 34 inches (865 mm) maximum above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 306.2 Toe Clearance.

ADAAG 306.2.3 Minimum Required Depth.

Where toe clearance is required at an element as part of a clear floor space, the toe clearance shall extend 17 inches (430 mm) minimum under the element.

ADAAG 306.2.5 Width.

Toe clearance shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum.

ADAAG 306.3 Knee Clearance.

ADAAG 306.3.3 Minimum Required Depth.

Where knee clearance is required under an element as part of a clear floor space, the knee clearance shall be 11 inches deep minimum at 9 inches above the ground, and 8 inches deep minimum at 27 inches (685 mm) above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 306.3.5 Width.

Knee clearance shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum.

Restrooms:

12. Storage of restroom related items renders lavatory located at exterior of toilet compartment within men's restroom inaccessible.

13. Required minimum knee and toe clearance not provided at lavatory located at exterior of toilet compartment within men's restroom

ADAAG 606 Lavatories and Sinks.

ADAAG 606.2 Clear Floor Space.

A clear floor space complying with 305, positioned for a forward approach, and knee and toe clearance complying with 306 shall be provided.

ADAAG 306.2 Toe Clearance.

ADAAG 306.2.3 Minimum Required Depth.

Where toe clearance is required at an element as part of a clear floor space, the toe clearance shall extend 17 inches (430 mm) minimum under the element.

ADAAG 306.2.5 Width.

Toe clearance shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum.

ADAAG 306.3 Knee Clearance.

ADAAG 306.3.3 Minimum Required Depth.

Where knee clearance is required under an element as part of a clear floor space, the knee clearance shall be 11 inches deep minimum at 9 inches above the ground, and 8 inches deep minimum at 27 inches (685 mm) above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 306.3.5 Width.

Knee clearance shall be 30 inches (760 mm) wide minimum.

14. Required insulation of pipes and water lines not provided under the lavatory located at exterior of toilet compartment within men's restroom.

ADAAG 606 Lavatories and Sinks.

ADAAG 606.5 Exposed Pipes and Surfaces.

Water supply and drain pipes under lavatories and sinks shall be insulated or otherwise configured to protect against contact. There shall be no sharp or abrasive surfaces under lavatories and sinks.

15. Inaccessible mirror located at exterior of toilet compartment within men's restroom.

16. Non-compliant mounted height of mirror located at exterior of toilet compartment within men's restroom exceeds maximum height allowance.

ADAAG 603.3 Mirrors.

Mirrors located above lavatories or countertops shall be installed with the bottom edge of the reflecting surface 40 inches (1015 mm) maximum above the finish floor or ground.

Mirrors not located above lavatories or countertops shall be installed with the bottom edge of the reflecting surface 35 inches (890 mm) maximum above the finish floor or ground.

17. Non-compliant distance of water closet from side wall located in toilet compartment in men's restroom.

ADAAG 604 Water Closets and Toilet Compartments.

ADAAG 604.2 Location.

The water closet shall be positioned with a wall or partition to the rear and to one side.

The centerline of the water closet shall be 16 inches minimum to 18 inches maximum from the side wall or partition

18. Non-compliant height of lavatory located in toilet compartment in men's restroom exceeds maximum height allowance.

ADAAG 606 Lavatories and Sinks.

ADAAG 606.1 General.

Lavatories and sinks shall comply with 606.

ADAAG 606.3 Height.

Lavatories and sinks shall be installed with the front of the higher of the rim or counter surface 34 inches (865 mm) maximum above the finish floor or ground.

19. Inaccessible hand soap dispenser located in toilet compartment in men's restroom.

20. Non-compliant mounted height of hand soap dispenser located in toilet compartment in men's restroom exceeds maximum height allowance.

ADAAG Advisory 606.1 General.

If soap and towel dispensers are provided, they must be located within the reach ranges specified in 308.

ADAAG 308.2 Forward Reach. ADAAG 308.2.1 Unobstructed.

Where a forward reach is unobstructed, the high forward reach shall be 48 inches maximum and the low forward reach shall be 15 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 308.2.2 Obstructed High Reach.

Where a high forward reach is over an obstruction, the clear floor space shall extend beneath the element for a distance not less than the required reach depth over the obstruction. The high forward reach shall be 48 inches maximum where the reach depth is 20 inches maximum. Where the reach depth exceeds 20 inches, the high forward reach shall be 44 inches maximum and the reach depth shall be 25 inches maximum.

ADAAG 308.3 Side Reach. ADAAG 308.3.1 Unobstructed.

Where a clear floor or ground space allows a parallel approach to an element and the side reach is unobstructed, the high side reach shall be 48 inches maximum and the low side reach shall be

15 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 308.3.2 Obstructed High Reach.

Where a clear floor or ground space allows a parallel approach to an element and the high side reach is over an obstruction, the height of the obstruction shall be 34 inches maximum and the depth of the obstruction shall be 24 inches maximum. The high side reach shall be 48 inches maximum for a reach depth of 10 inches maximum. Where the reach depth exceeds 10 inches, the high side reach shall be 46 inches maximum for a reach depth of 24 inches maximum.

21. Inaccessible coat hook located in toilet compartment in men's restroom.

22. Non-compliant height of coat hook located in toilet compartment in men's restroom exceeds maximum height allowance.

ADAAG 604 Water Closets and Toilet Compartments.

ADAAG 604.8.3 Coat Hooks and Shelves.

Coat hooks shall be located within one of the reach ranges specified in 308.

ADAAG 308.2 Forward Reach. ADAAG 308.2.1 Unobstructed.

Where a forward reach is unobstructed, the high forward reach shall be 48 inches maximum and the low forward reach shall be 15 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 308.2.2 Obstructed High Reach.

Where a high forward reach is over an obstruction, the clear floor space shall extend beneath the element for a distance not less than the required reach depth over the obstruction. The high forward reach shall be 48 inches maximum where the reach depth is 20 inches maximum. Where the reach depth exceeds 20 inches, the high forward reach shall be 44 inches maximum and the reach depth shall be 25 inches maximum.

ADAAG 308.3 Side Reach. ADAAG 308.3.1 Unobstructed.

Where a clear floor or ground space allows a parallel approach to an element and the side reach is unobstructed, the high side reach shall be 48 inches maximum and the low side reach shall be

15 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground.

ADAAG 308.3.2 Obstructed High Reach.

Where a clear floor or ground space allows a parallel approach to an element and the high side reach is over an obstruction, the height of the obstruction shall be 34 inches maximum and the depth of the obstruction shall be 24 inches maximum. The high side reach shall be 48 inches maximum for a reach depth of 10 inches maximum. Where the reach depth exceeds 10 inches, the high side reach shall be 46 inches maximum for a reach depth of 24 inches maximum.

16. The above listing is not to be considered all-inclusive of the barriers, conditions or violations encountered by Plaintiff and/or which exist at the Subject Property. Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Subject Property in order to determine all of the discriminatory acts violating the ADA.

17. Plaintiff has attempted to gain access to the Subject Property, but because of his disability has been denied access to, and has been denied the benefits of services, programs, and activities of the Subject Property, and has otherwise been discriminated against and damaged by Defendants, because of the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations set forth above, and expects to be discriminated against in the future, unless and until Defendants are compelled to remove the unlawful barriers and conditions and comply with the ADA.

18. Plaintiff, in his capacity as a tester, will absolutely return to the Subject Property when Defendants modify the Subject Property or modifies the policies and practices to accommodate individuals who have physical disabilities to confirm said modifications have been completed in accordance with the requirements of the ADA

19. The removal of the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations set forth herein is readily achievable and can be accomplished and carried out without much difficulty or expense. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(B)(2)(A)(iv); 42 U.S.C. § 12181(9); 28 C.F.R. § 36.304.

20. Plaintiff is without adequate remedy at law and is suffering irreparable harm, and reasonably anticipates that he will continue to suffer irreparable harm unless and until Defendants are required to remove the physical barriers, dangerous conditions and ADA violations that exist at the Subject Property, including those set forth herein.

21. The Plaintiff has been obligated to retain undersigned counsel for the filing and prosecution of this action. The Plaintiff is entitled to have his reasonable attorney's fees, costs and expenses paid by the Defendants, pursuant to 42 U.S.C., §§ 12205 and 12217.

22. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §12188(a), this Court is provided with authority to grant injunctive relief to Plaintiff, including an order to alter the Subject Property to make it readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA, and closing the Subject Property until the requisite modifications are completed.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court issue a permanent injunction enjoining Defendants from continuing its discriminatory practices, ordering Defendants to remove the physical barriers to access and alter the Subject Property to make it readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA, closing the Subject Property until the barriers are removed and requisite alterations are completed, and awarding Plaintiff his reasonable attorney's fees, expert fees, costs and litigation expenses incurred in this action.

Respectfully submitted,

s/ Glenn R. Goldstein

Glenn R. Goldstein, Esq. (FBN: 55873)

Attorney for Plaintiff

Glenn R. Goldstein & Associates, PLLC

8101 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 504

Miami, Florida 33138

(305) 900-2373

GGoldstein@G2Legal.net

s/ Lauren N. Wassenberg

Lauren N. Wassenberg, Esq. (FBN: 34083)

Attorney for Plaintiff

Lauren N. Wassenberg & Associates, P.A.

33 SE 4th St., Ste. 100

Boca Raton, Florida 33432

(561) 571-0646

WassenbergL@gmail.com